

IMPROVING INFORMATION LITERACY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AN UNORTHODOX WAY: THE LITERATURE POTENTIAL FOR ACRL FRAMEWORK APPLICATION

Tatiana Sanches^{1,4}, Maria Luz Antunes^{2,4}, Carlos Lopes^{3,4}

¹UIDEF, Instituto de Educação (Universidade de Lisboa), Lisboa, Portugal,
tsanches@fpie.ulisboa.pt

²Escola Superior de Tecnologia da Saúde de Lisboa (Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa), Lisboa,
Portugal, mluz.antunes@estesl.ipl.pt

³ISPA – Instituto Universitário, Lisboa, Portugal, clopes@ispa.pt

⁴APPsyCI – ISPA-Instituto Universitário, Lisboa, Portugal

ABSTRACT

The implementation of the ACRL Framework has been a challenge for higher education librarians. This study proposes an unconventional way of adopting the opportunities of literary reading to teach the six conceptual frames recommended by this guiding document. From a literature review on the importance that literary reading has in the individual's life as well as the experiences of higher education libraries in the promotion of literary reading, a reflection emerges on the opportunity to teach information skills in this context. The main objective of this work is to make a creative and innovative contribution to the practical and situated application of the ACRL Framework in a non-traditional context, exploring literary reading to explain concepts, dispositions, and practices. For each conceptual frame are listed examples and situated learning strategies, which can contribute to the acquisition of essential and structuring instruments of the mechanisms necessary for information skills. Regarding specifically reading comprehension, it is important to work on the ability to extract relevant information from written texts so that it becomes a powerful tool for obtaining and processing information, transversal learning, and social insertion and is not reduced to school learning, but reveals its potential in extra-scholarly contexts, such as reading groups, meetings with authors, or the constitution of specific collections for leisure reading in university libraries.

Keywords: Information Literacy, Higher Education, Leisure Reading, Reading Development, ACRL Framework, Literature, Literacy, Information Literacy Teaching and Learning

"We all read ourselves and the world around us so that we can see what we are and where we are. We read to understand, or to begin to understand. We have no choice but to read. Reading, almost as much as breathing, is our essential function." (Chartier & Cavallo, 1998, p.143).

1. INTRODUCTION

We know that student-centered learning requires the significant use of available learning resources, based on printed, digital, multimedia, or other information. Therefore, the main objectives when considering the development of information literacy skills are to improve the way of handling information in multiple media, to enable higher education students in the correct and ethical use of information in different contexts, and also to make it learning functions both in the classroom and throughout life. Potentially, this will impact in his personal and social development, in educational success, in the formation of personality, in autonomy, in his way of being and understanding his insertion space.

Librarians are urged to learn about the emerging pedagogical changes that they can take advantage of to design their courses, integrating this knowledge into a more segmented, clear, and objective training offer, and based on international references, such as the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (ACRL, 2016). This can be understood as a tool that mirrors a spectrum of mental skills, practices, and habits that broaden and deepen learning

through engagement with the information ecosystem. The new Framework renews the concept of information literacy, defining it as a set of integrated skills that link the reflexive discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, as well as the use of information in the creation of new knowledge, and ethical participation in learning communities. The approach to the application of the Framework has been explored by some scholars (Upson, O'Neil, & Colquhoun, 2017; Miller, 2018; Harden, 2019; Hendrigan, Mukunda, & Cukierman, 2020), proving to be challenging, but very opportune due to the flexible and potentiating form of deeper learning and related to the disciplinary contents. Nevertheless, is interesting to consider multiple contexts as opportunities to teach information literacy, particularly in the context of exploring literary works.

2. LEISURE READING IN ACTION

When we think of reading in the context of higher education institutions, we naturally associate this instrumental intention. It is for this reason that academic libraries seek to provide services and build collections based on this prerogative: read to learn, read to know, thus constituting libraries eminently specialized in curricular subjects. At the same time, enjoy reading is usually related to individual motivations, not exclusively related to the school or the schooling process. In this sense, public libraries have a reading mission that responds to this need, offering services and collections focused on leisure reading, while university libraries traditionally focus on and promote instrumental reading. For this reason, the teaching of Information Literacy has been linked to examples focused on the search for scientific and technical information and this has become the orthodox way of teaching these skills. Currently, we are witnessing the increasingly transversal recognition of the importance of reading, proposing the creation of a social environment favorable to the valorization of books, reading, and cultural and scientific experience, namely through public policies or corporate initiatives with social impact. The virtualization of how cultural goods and knowledge, in general, are accessed has been changing reading habits. The news that appears on the screen, through instant warnings, immediate access to email on the cell phone, social networks, hyperlinks, and the multimedia flood are a reality and some studies have pointed out that these influences change the way the brain processes the information (Carr, 2010; Wolf, 2018). For Wolf (2018), concerns about attention span, critical thinking, and overconfidence in technology should never be just about children. This researcher, when conducting a study on herself, found that although she is a reading expert her ability to read in-depth was affected as she became more dependent on digital. This circumstance worsened in 2020 with the limitations imposed by the pandemic COVID-19, leading to more people using, in more activities, the virtual means of access to information and communication, which has led to exhaustion and tiredness, already called zoom fatigue (Sklar, 2020). In the opinion of the NY Times columnist, Margaret Renkl (2020), there is now a desperate need to move away from the screens, combined with the need to slow down and dive not in the breaking news, but into the timelessness of the printed page. The opportunity is evident and the question is how can the importance of traditional reading in higher education be reinforced while teaching information literacy? Considering that it is possible to act on both lines, that is, on digital and printed documentation, we should, within the scope of university libraries, support electronic access to information, at the same time that we promote reading on paper, reinforcing the idea that strengthening the skills of concentration, memorization, and focus, through the deceleration of reading, will also include the literary reading of printed works (Elliott, 2007; Macadam, 1995). The importance of literary reading has had the attention of several authors and has given rise to wide-ranging interdisciplinary debates. Oatley (2016), in the scope of the cognitive sciences, referred that the reading of literary works can be thought of as a form of awareness of oneself and the other, allowing inner changes that are related to the reader's involvement with the story. According to the author, this happens because characters and complex circumstances in which

they find themselves are perceived through literary reading (not often found in real life). Thus, the reader can make inferences, establish emotional involvement, and increase the capacity for empathy, fundamental social skills. At the same time, literary reading contributes to the increase of social and cultural capital, constituting itself as an intangible asset for the individual. For university libraries, being aware of this can help find good opportunities to teach information literacy across the board in teaching academic skills.

2.1. Impact of leisure reading on academic skills

Academic skills must be understood as a set of personal and interpersonal skills, particularly relevant in the context of higher education. To pursue their goals, students develop several generic skills such as personal organization and time management, communication, conflict resolution or ethical behavior, but also specific skills essential to the production and communication of academic and scientific research work, such as critical thinking, planning and knowledge and application of research methods, and scientific writing and dissemination techniques (Garrido & Prada, 2016). The development of these skills adds greater autonomy, capacity for self-regulation, and adaptation to the student, benefiting their learning and allowing intellectual growth and updating, thus promoting academic success. In addition to these academic skills required in higher education, reading and writing are fundamental skills, since, being transversal to the entire disciplinary spectrum, they consolidate and legitimize learning (Levya, 2015). Reading, in particular, involves complex cognitive processes, including the narrative capacity, that is, to understand the thread of a story and, when it is shared, it is associated with orality. Narrative and oral skills are, therefore, at stake at the same time, whenever a literary reading is shared (Macadam, 1995). It is therefore pertinent to consider literary reading as a significant contribution to the development of the academic competences of higher education students. This idea has been affirmed by several authors (Macadam, 1995; Tabackova, 2015; Levya, 2015, 2015a; Douglas, Barnett, Poletti, Seaboyer, & Kennedy, 2016), who are unanimous in describing the reading, which corresponds to a higher-order reasoning ability, as the basis for critical thinking. The authors affirm that the exercise of reading will equip students in the long term, allowing them to acquire knowledge and skills that can be applied throughout their lives, still being preponderant support in the development of academic writing.

Another important idea is that reading proficiency is particularly determined by the pleasure given to the reading experience (Smith & Young, 2008; Gilbert & Fister, 2011). This is a fundamental clue for teachers and librarians who work with young people in training, particularly as reading promoters. In other words, if we want students to be lifelong readers, it is necessary to provide meaningful monitoring of learning, but it is also important to consider ways to help them develop their tastes. In this sense, the choices of the readings that provide greater satisfaction can be made autonomously or oriented but should be based on broadband of options. This aim opens space for the diversity of readings in the academic environment, removing all the role of instrumental reading and enhancing access to new ways of reading and knowing, namely through the constitution of collections of literature, the foment of reading groups, or the meeting with writers and other authors. In this way spaces will be opened to think and learn critically, cultivating tastes, fostering encounters and dialogue between all members of the academic community, and providing opportunities for leisure reading, while cultivating and developing skills transversal academic institutions.

2.2. Academic Libraries Supporting Leisure Reading

Higher education libraries assume a transversal role in the promotion of academic skills, either through their teaching and research support functions, or through the core functions of guarding, preserving and disseminating collections and resources. Literature-related collections are not always a priority investment, but result in opportunities to connect the community, broaden

students' cultural horizons and implement strategies to foster recreational reading (Dewan, 2010). Further, according to Mahaffy (2009, p. 164), "The practice of pleasure reading develops skill sets that support academic learning. When academic libraries reach out to their communities to promote a culture of reading, both the institution and the community will benefit."

In Portugal, the national strategy in force around reading is the National Reading Plan 2017-2027 (PNL, 2017). This is a public policy whose main purposes are to increase the reading practices and habits of the Portuguese population and improve their reading and literacy skills. In one of its issues, the *Ler + no Superior* [More reading in Higher Education] defines a strategy to give impetus to reading in Higher Education, based on an attitude of curiosity and adventure, creativity and openness to knowledge and the world, and promotion of the pleasure for the book – both for teachers and students. At the same time, at an Ibero-American level, the National Reading Plan 2027 has been collaborating with the Red de Universidades Lectoras [Reading Universities Network] (RIUL, 2020) since 2018. RIUL emerged in November 2006, with the aim of enhancing the role of reading and writing at the University, not only as work tools, the so-called academic literacy, but also as a vehicle for the integral promotion of the university community. Currently, the Network has the support of 46 universities that propose several common activities - symposia, meetings, exhibitions, publications, creating environments conducive to reading and writing in the university environment.

In this context, it is natural to consider the contribution of academic libraries as part of a broader strategy to promote reading among university students. Libraries can assume and must advocate, among others, three ways of promoting reading:

- the constitution of specific collections for leisure reading in university libraries;
- the promotion of meetings with authors;
- the implementation of reading groups

In an exploratory analysis, it appears that there are already some academic libraries in Portugal that gather literary book collections just for leisure. This is the case of the ISPA library - University Institute, specialized in Psychology, the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, and the Instituto de Educação da Universidade de Lisboa.

ISPA's academic library (<http://cd.ispa.pt/>) serves as a hub for reading and literacy activities. It has collections of literature and promotes meetings with writers, in a regular initiative called "The Pleasure of Reading". This is a meeting place for readers, authors, students, editors, booksellers and librarians in the form of a forum on reading. It is a multifaceted event with book launches, conversations around the books and small book exhibitions and exhibitions in the academic library. Within the framework of this initiative is explained: "A book is an open window beyond the reader. An infinite discovery of others and, in this way, of ourselves. For this reason, only illusory, a book is a solitary pleasure. Books are a powerful myth. These are the minutes of our accumulated knowledge, which we ambitiously seek to recover. But as their number exceeds our capacities and our available time, we are left with the persistent task of electing those who will deserve our attention. This task stimulates our appetite and feeds the irreplaceable pleasure of reading, of reading continuously, like an endless journey" (Lopes, 2002). Additionally, in the Academic Competences discipline of the same Institute, 10 minutes of reading are used at the beginning of each class named by "The pleasure of reading in the classroom". This initiative is part of the LER + program and aims to raise awareness of the importance of reading as an instrument of thought and written creation. Still in an experimental way, students are being asked some questions about habits, motivations and reflections on reading in Higher Education, which results are intended to be presented in future studies.

The Leiria Polytechnic Libraries (<https://www.ipleiria.pt/sdoc/>) have stimulated leisure reading among their community, at the same time that they seek to create skills for information literacy. To achieve these goals, they elaborate several strategies that, according to internal evaluation, are fulfilling the objectives. One of these initiatives, entitled "Varanda Literária" [Literary Balcony]

consists of an exhibition space, associated with a literary collection, where decorations related with the various themes are made: food day, World book day, Autumn, Christmas, Halloween, holidays, summer, among others. Several strategies were used to enrich this book collection: creation of a flyer to suggest the acquisition of books by readers; bi-monthly interviews “Shall we talk about Libraries?” where respondents, among other issues, identify the books that marked them and why, these being acquired; acquisition of national and international new book releases in Portuguese and English, also reminding international students; collecting suggestions for acquisition among library staff, thus making it an easier method to encourage reading a book that also marked them; and request to national publishers to offer titles.

At the Institute of Education, in the University of Lisbon, the library (<http://www.ie.ulisboa.pt/biblioteca>) manages a reading group: *Duas de Letra - Readers Group*, which started in February 2016. Open to students, teachers, researchers and non-teaching staff, it sought to build, around the reading of fruition, a space for meeting and dialogue between all members of the community. The exercise of the habit of thinking and learning outside the classroom context, with the expression of one's own ideas and the respect and appreciation of the ideas of others, was also an accomplished purpose (Matos & Sanches, 2017). As already mentioned, some literature confirms that reading groups are important contributors to the development and consolidation of competences in Higher Education. Eckel, Kezar and Lieberman (2000, p. 91) stated “Reading groups build on highly developed academic strengths, such as inquiry, focused thought, writing, and contemplation, to advance institutional goals”. The National Endowment for the Arts (2007, p. 68) also underlines the same idea when it finds that “Reading for pleasure correlates strongly with academic achievement”. In Portugal reading groups are still an incipient initiative, but they are beginning to assert themselves.

3. TEACHING INFORMATION LITERACY

In 2000, the American Library Association (ALA, 2000), through its Association of College and Research Libraries section, defined this concept, explaining that a trained individual with information skills must be able to determine the need for information and its extension, access information efficiently and effectively, evaluate information and its sources critically, incorporate selected information into your knowledge base, use information effectively to fulfill a specific objective, understand the economic, legal and social implications around of using information and knowing how to access and use it ethically and legally. Later, in 2016, the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education emerged, the product of an intense work of reconceptualization of contents and competencies and issued by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL, 2016). This Framework defines information literacy as a standard of integrated competencies that include the reflexive discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in the ethical and legal creation of new knowledge. In summary, the Framework articulates three interconnected axes - the theorizing of six conceptual areas, the identification of knowledge practices, and the advocacy of attitudinal dispositions to act in the information ecosystem.

The first results of applying this conceptual tool are already visible. In the study by Lathan, Gross, and Julien (2019), the authors report that the most successful strategies for implementing the Framework, declared by the participants, related to their presentation to other librarians and teachers across the campus, and their attempts to adapt and reconfigure the information knowledge that this tool represents. Since it is much more conceptual, not being able to be given in brief initial sessions, the recommendation is that the concepts it advocates be embedded in learning throughout the year. The new Framework supports an expected metamorphosis given the need to align existing references with the current process of creating and using information. and presents a set of frames (conceptual frames) or interconnected main concepts, representing

comprehensive ideas that are intended to apply to many academic disciplines (ACRL, 2016; Fisher, 2017; Swanson, 2017), namely:

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

Each of these conceptual frames includes a knowledge practice section used to demonstrate how the mastery of the concept leads to its application in new situations and the creation of more knowledge; also includes a set of dispositions that work the know-how in the learning process.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a theoretical reflection based on the literature review and seeks to highlight the flexible essence of this new pedagogical tool. To this end, it describes and explains, from each of the proposed conceptual frames, which are the significant interceptions between the Framework and Literary Reading, inspiring librarians to act to ensure their application, through the management of literary collections, of the meetings with writers or promoting reading groups, thus contributing to the construction of transversal competences in Higher Education.

5. RESULTS: INTERCEPTION OF LITERARY READING PROMOTION PRACTICES WITH INFORMATION LITERACY

The analysis of literary reading promotion practices developed in an academic context points to a relationship between information literacy and the skills associated with it. The new Framework suggests a different approach in order to integrate information literacy training in different contexts, highlighting knowledge and understanding about the acquisition of specific skills. The new Framework is also more flexible for teaching information literacy. With the different approaches to promoting literary reading, often mixing leisure and critical thinking, with experiences based on practices, this flexibility has significant advantages. The results are presented below in a table, which are then clarified in the further explanation of each conceptual frame.

Table 1. Interceptions of Literary Reading Promotion Practices with ACRL Framework Concepts

Six Threshold Concepts anchoring the New Framework for Information Literacy (2016)	Literary Reading Promoting Practices examples
1. Authority is Constructed and Contextual	The meeting with a writer, illustrator, or other personality
2. Information Creation as a Process	Reading group; debate
3. Information has Value	Literary Book Collection; Reading group;
4. Research as Inquiry	Shared literary reading; Reading group
5. Scholarship is a Conversation	Literary reading moments; Reading in Class /Reading Groups
6. Searching as Strategic Exploration	Literary Book Collections; Shared literary reading

5.1. Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

Whatever the document at hand, it is important to question the source, the context, and the adequacy. In this context, the idea that all sources of information have an author is emphasized,

who due to his reputation, experience or status attributes or not credibility to the information. Information based on the concept of authority is, therefore, derived from an authorial purpose and context, with the exception that some information is more useful than others, depending on the information that is needed (ACRL, 2016). The alignment of pedagogical objectives for this first conceptual framework can be made from a set of premises that frame the activity of meeting with the writer. As an activity to promote reading and writing, the meeting with a writer, illustrator, or other personality (researcher, scientist) in an academic library must be planned with the necessary advance and be part of a small educational project, involving, for example, the reading of a work or part of a work, writing activities resulting from that reading, research activities (namely about the author's life and work, in different information sources), and the promotion and incentive to extracurricular academic works that can assume a multidisciplinary and more creative character (exhibition, article for the academic journal, bookmark). On the day of the session, there can be spontaneous interventions and free debate. This exploratory contact enhances the author's contextual knowledge, opening space for the explanation of the concept of authority.

5.2. Information Creation as a Process

Understanding that the creation of information is a process implies envisaging the incorporation of activities, tasks, and learning assessments that require the articulation of information needs; finding information and resources in digital environments; the organization, processing, analysis, and interpretation of information; and the comparison and critical evaluation of the credibility and reliability of the information and its sources. It also implies the understanding that this whole process is underlying when looking at a final product: a scientific journal, an article, a book. An opportunity that can be created, from literary exploration, to understand this second conceptual framework is the activity of reading groups. In these, the debate on literary works can broaden and go beyond the work itself, for example, the creative process can be talked about. It will be interesting to have a good diversity of books to support the session, to introduce books with discordant proposals concerning the reflections that each participant presents, opening discussion and group reflection, broadening the concept of reading. Even outside the context of a reading group, this activity can be promoted, using the documentary background of the library, for example from historical novels, addressing the theme of fiction and non-fiction, of building publications from credible sources and, in academic terms, what should be the criteria in this information creation process.

5.3. Information Has Value

The value of information is largely subjective and associated with the needs of each user and is related to the perception of the real or potential benefit. Thus, the information has a value attributed to it by those who market it or make it freely available, albeit at a cost to the end-user, but it contains a greater or lesser intrinsic value depending on the end-user and what he obtains as a result. Still, in a literary context, it is possible to debate the importance of literary awards for the lives of writers. What criteria will be used by juries to determine, measure, or express the social value of a particular work, to support a decision to award a prize? How does the allocation of financing or access to creative grants affect production? How does access to other literature affect your position and quality as a writer? And Libraries, how do they play their part in the information value cycle? These and other issues can be debated in contexts of information literacy training, seeking to bring students closer to realities that may be more familiar to them. The physical collections of literary works from libraries can create a good basis for discussion about the value associated with information.

5.4. Research as Inquiry

The investigation is iterative and will depend not only on a process of trial and error but also on increasingly complex questions that arise from this process and whose answers develop new questions or lines of research in any area of knowledge (ACRL, 2016). Shared literary reading, particularly in reading groups, fosters literacy, critical thinking, helps curb the decline in reading habits, and increases the ability to concentrate and contemplate, while stimulating the mind, and spirit, and students' imagination (Dewan, 2010). Levy (2015a) converges to these same arguments when stating that leisure reading is a predictor of higher academic performance, generating students with a more comprehensive and consistent learning capacity, as it combines more lexicon and more referential benefits. At the same time, already established readers have a positive predisposition for academic learning, which is done significantly through reading, as this allows access to more knowledge, constituting the basis for challenging, interesting, meaningful, and even exciting experiences. Therefore, each group facilitator has scope to create, through the direct relationship with the group, renewed readings, uniting interpretations, and establishing the relationships between the various moments in a fluid way. It is also important, and whenever possible, to allow each participant at the end of the session to return to the book, stimulating their mind from new questions, to return to reading the text, supported or not by the group that accompanies it.

5.5. Scholarship as Conversation

The idea behind this conceptual framework gives the production of academic results a commitment to the community (ACRL, 2016), that is, the academy is permanently involved in new contributions and discoveries, giving the academic environment space for dialogue where ideas they are formulated and discussed. Academic writing itself is the result of an asynchronous dialogue, where each author interacts with what others have said and written before them, being relevant that this dialogue is visible to readers, through the correct and adequate citation and referencing. In the case of literary reading (in class or in the reading groups), this premise can be observed through intertextuality, that is, the appearance of cross-references in a book that refers to characters, contexts, or actions in other books. The verification of the existence of these literary writing mechanisms demonstrates respectful, welcoming, and inclusive practices in the written construction. This is an opportunity to talk about plagiarism, quotation, and reference, but at the same time to discuss collaboration and cooperation. These seem to be the best ways for a researcher to balance the competition with his peers and, for that, it is necessary to find the most effective, collaborative, and collective way of acting, which forms the much-needed dialogue platform in the academic context.

5.6. Searching as Strategic Exploration

Finding the information requires a combination of research, discovery, and some luck, which are gained and refined through experience. The competencies recommended here, therefore, go through the work of knowledge that is increasingly deepened in information resources that make it possible to search for information, training the capacities to locate, select, retrieve and evaluate information, using a variety of sources and tools (printed and electronic), discerning between academic and non-academic sources, between primary and secondary sources, compiling, categorizing and managing citations during the information search process, applying an ethical and legal standard in the use of sources and information, and critically evaluating the sources and information resources, which should be strategically applied previously and continuously to the academic writing process. And what opportunity can be given from literary collections in academic libraries? A documentary background built with coherence, diversity, technically well described and containing good keywords can be the basis for exploring and discovering

interesting and meaningful information, even if it is not directly linked to the purpose of the Research.

6. CONCLUSION

Higher Education is a complex, demanding, and challenging environment. Students play an important role in creating new knowledge, in understanding the contours and dynamics of the information ecosystem, as well as in the ethical and legal use of scientific information and data. Information professionals, in turn, can contribute to the identification of the great ideas of knowledge and the learning of students. They are the great drivers of the creation of a new curriculum, oriented towards the skills of information literacy in collaboration with teachers. These information literacy programs aim to be developed, implemented, reflected, and revised both in libraries (informal learning) and integrated into academic curricula (formal learning). The ACRL Framework is a reference document in which information professionals and teachers find inspiration and support. It is also useful for the development of knowledge infrastructures, including systems and services that actively support students and researchers in their close contact with information, communication, and knowledge sharing. The present study sought to demonstrate the practical application of the Framework, through the unorthodox example in which the information is transversally applied to literary reading promotion practices. Despite focusing on examples, the authors believe that this exercise can inspire others - teachers and information professionals - in teaching information skills. Information literacy must be a well-founded practice that ultimately does not limit the fulfillment of the thematic content of academic programs, but that encourages self-learning processes by both students and teachers. This is a task with ethical, cultural, and social consequences, with the educational foundations that students need to be self-reliant and that is why any contexts can be important learning opportunities.

7. LITERATURE

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